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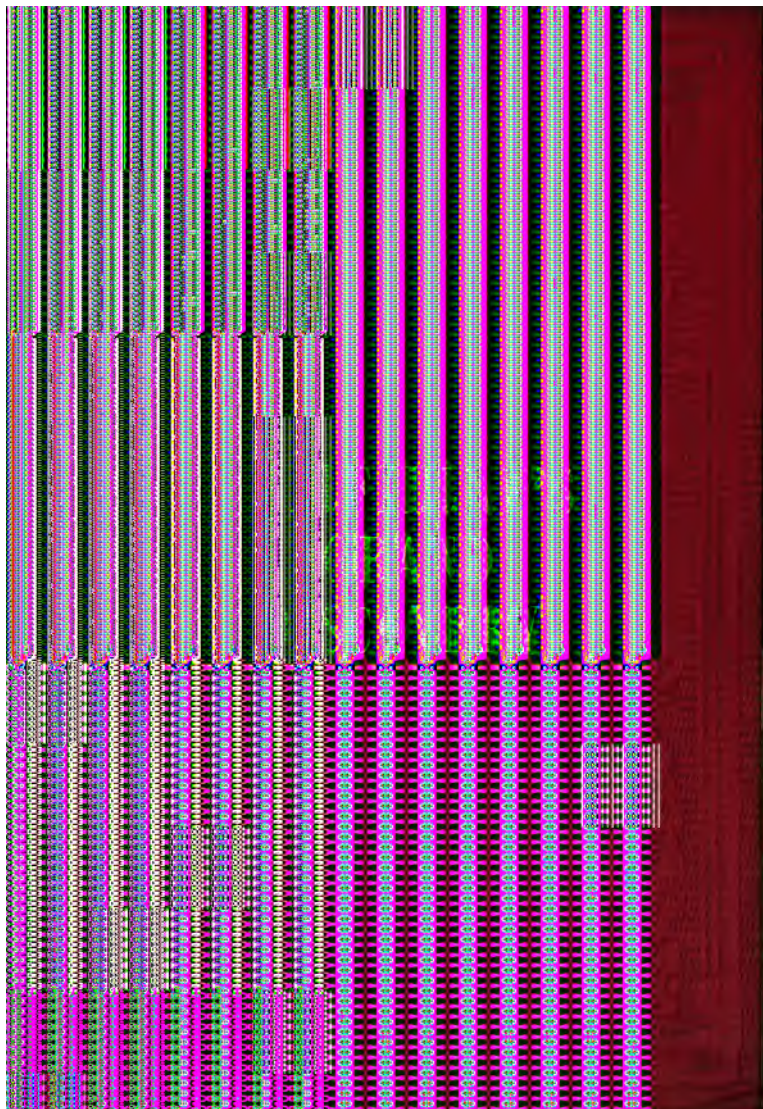
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THE
GRAND DISCOVERY;
OR,
THE FATHERHOOD
OF
God.

BY
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
The Paternal Relation and Character outlined . . .	5

CHAPTER II.

No discovery of God's Paternal Character in Nature	19
--	----

CHAPTER III.

No discovery of the Father in Man, in his Science, Philosophy, History, Heart, or in any of his Religions	36
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

The Scripture discovery of the Father	49
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Objections answered	68
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

Conclusions drawn	84
-----------------------------	----

THE
GRAND DISCOVERY;
OR,
GOD'S PATERNAL CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE PATERNAL RELATION AND CHARACTER
OUTLINED.

A FATHER! No word in the English tongue carries in it such a quiet depth of meaning as the word Father. It is a full representation of one of the most familiar, yet most sublime of the aspects in which man can stand to others of his species. Let us look how varied, yet harmonious, are the ideas implied in the paternal character.

A father is a link connecting man with past generations—the transmitter of blood and soul from the original progenitor of the

race. He is the begetter of his child, the living type according to which the child is modelled. He is, in his child, reproduced and revived. He loves and pities his children with a peculiar intensity of interest. He stands answerable, in a great measure, for his children's safety and maintenance in infancy, for their education and support in childhood, and for their conduct and character in youth. He is bound to administer to them counsel, reproof, and discipline, and to set before them an example of virtue, as well as to shelter them from danger, and to identify their interests for ever with his own. If they obey his will, he is pledged in law and justice to be their protector and friend. If they disobey, he is called upon in mercy and benevolence to save them, if possible, from the cause, consequences, and curse of their disobedience.

There are other thoughts connected with the paternal relation; but a survey of these will abundantly answer our purpose in this introductory chapter.

A father is a link connecting his children with the generations of the past. Supposing

even that he is intrinsically insignificant, yet his relation to what has been gives him a certain grandeur. If but an "and," it is an "and" connecting a chain of sentences which began with the first word. He becomes a representative character, and that too of myriads upon myriads who have risen, passed, and perished in former ages. While he, therefore, should regard his children as important, because they are to continue the great stream, and to become, it may be, in their turn, the fathers of many generations, they are bound to look up to him with a reverence and love, proportioned not merely to his personal merits, but to his august position.

A father, as the begetter of his child, cannot fail to transmit a portion of his character to his offspring. Each child is made in his father's image; the family face is not so certainly transmitted from generation to generation as is the family character. Circumstances, education, and the thousand influences of life may modify this hereditary stamp, but they seldom prevail to obliterate it; and often, especially in the great crises of existence, such

as severe trial, marriage, or death, it reappears in its strength. The son, speaking generally, lives as the father has lived, loves as the father had loved before him, carries into a different rank, or a different profession, a proportion of the paternal spirit. Even when he eclipses his father, it is through a fuller possession of similar powers; and his death-bed darkens with the same shadow, or sleeps in the same gentle sunshine as that of his relative. The principal exception to this is in cases where maternal influence is not only of paramount force, but happens to run in an opposite channel from that of the other parent. This exception, however, is one of that sort which strengthens the rule.

The love and pity of a father for his children are proverbial, and are often alluded to in Holy Writ. It is not necessary for our purpose, even were it possible, to give comparative measurements of the warmth and depth of the respective affections entertained for their children by father and mother. When the persons are good and kindhearted, both affections partake of the infinite; no plummet can sound them. In reference to every other

species of property, the terms "our" and "my" are cold and limited. In the case of the paternal or maternal relations they are full of meaning. "*Our* child!" what expression lies in that one simple word! What pathos there was in the exclamation of David, "Oh Absalom—*my* son—*my* son!" The link revealed in these pronouns is such as no absence can break, no distance diminish, no length of time rust, no coldness, and no crime, nor death itself destroy. The reason is obvious. The child has been to the parent—in a sense altogether peculiar—"bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," as no other human being ever was or could be. This property, indeed, conventionally ceases, but the relationship and the profound interest connected with it never do. As long as life remains the parent sees his own soul looking out at him from his child's eyes. He remembers "that son or daughter was *ONCE ME*;" and even after death has prematurely broken the tie, the father continues to claim an interest in the cold dust of his offspring, and will not let him go into the eternal world without erecting some monument which shall

record that he called, and still calls him, *his own*.

We cannot better illustrate the strength of the paternal passion than by referring to the well-known case of Edmund Burke. This great and good man, misappreciated by his age, disappointed in his generous ambitions, had concentrated all his earthly hopes in a son. Him he loved with a passion passing the love of woman. In him he garnered up his heart. In him, although he was a person of no common accomplishments, he saw merits and virtues which existed only in embryo, or in the father's transforming fancy. That son died. His father's soul was turned up as by a tempest. He refused to be comforted because he was not. His peace was blasted—his health undermined. His majestic reason almost reeled, and he spent the remainder of his brief life in filling up the intervals of arduous public labours with melodious and passionate reiterations of the cry, "My son! my son!" And now young Burke sleeps, at once guarded and glorified by the angel wings of his father's mighty genius; and it is as if he had had a nation, instead of one man, to

mourn over him. Proof this, not merely of the power of genius in beautifying the commonplace, dignifying the obscure, immortalizing the transient—making, through the golden haze on its own eye, every cloud appear a cloud of glory, each common worm a glowworm, each arch a rainbow, each spark a star, and each star a sun ; but proof also of the profundity of the love which often lies only half-known till convulsion discloses it in a father's heart.

A father's responsibilities is a text too wide for our present plan : suffice it to say that he is answerable for the support and safety of his children in their tender years, till they are able to discern between their right hand and their left hand ; and long after that period he stands up as their natural defender, nourisher, and protecting shield. When their intellect begins to develop itself, he stands by, not merely watching the process with unutterable interest—and surely the sight of the evening-star, breaking through clouds, is not so beautiful as the first shining out of immortal soul in a child's dark or deep-blue eye—but seeking to remove every obstruction,

and chase away every obscuring mist, before the dawning mind. And he is responsible also, in a great measure, for the success of the great experiment of human life in his children. If it fails, he is, we believe, always more or less to blame; if it succeeds, he has generally, verily not always, a share in the merit, although, perhaps, he may not live to reap much personal happiness from the fruits of the success.

Among the many duties connected with the parental relation, we name three as peculiarly important—good example, education, and discipline. It is a mere truism that example is better than precept, especially in a relation in which the two parties are brought into a connection so close and constant. Men may deceive their neighbours, their friends, their enemies, their wives, themselves, but they cannot deceive their children. Any fault in a parent, any inconsistency, any disproportion between profession and practice, or precept and practice, falls upon the child's eye with the force and precision of sunbeams on a daguerreotype plate. Did he reach his conclusions by reasoning, they might be con-

troverted ; but they come to him by a swifter, surer, process—by instinct, by intuition, by that mysterious wisdom, that “life hid in God,” which is in children, and from whose verdicts there lies no appeal. Parents may well tremble as they feel God watching them through the loophole of a child’s eye, and hear the voice of the Supreme Judge accosting them, in those artless accents, which sometimes sound to their consciences like syllables of doom. But apart from all considerations of awe, the parent should be impelled by motives of love to contribute this most important element to the proper training of his child, who is a creature of imitation, and who will copy even that conduct which his instinct condemns. He should stand up before his family consciously as a model ; and should rejoice in nothing so much as in seeing his well-regulated life and dignified bearing, and benevolent feelings, insensibly imbibed by, and gradually reappearing in, his children.

Parents very generally feel that they are bound to *educate* their offspring, but often they misapprehend what is implied in that

term. To educate is not simply to appoint proper masters to superintend the training of their children in the various branches of knowledge; it is, besides this, to exercise a general supervision of their mental growth; to "aid," as poor Byron expresses it, "their mind's development;" to watch the stages of their progress, and adjust the one to the other; to discover the general bias and ruling powers and passions of their nature; to guide, in short, the current of their idiosyncrasy into those channels of habit and profession and tone of character in which he would wish them to flow through life. How much an intelligent father might thus do in making the mere dead knowledge acquired at school to live and fructify; in assisting children to digest their information and form it into a whole; in counteracting the evil influences of public tuition; in moulding, under the eye of parental solicitude and Christian principle, the materials of the future Man! And how sad to reflect that so many are, from ignorance, incompetent to perform this office of home-education, or, from carelessness and vice, unwilling; or, from incessant avocation,

absolutely prevented! And yet, never till this practice shall prevail, can we hope to see a well-educated people.

As to *discipline*, the tendency of the age runs toward the loosening of its bands, and especially to the abolition of corporal punishment. We are persuaded that a vast amount of cant and sentimentalism prevails on this subject. We insist not on the indiscriminate, the unwise, the partial, or the cruel use of the rod; but we maintain, first, that its wise and modified use is enjoined in Scripture, in the *spirit* of the whole Book as well as in many individual passages, such as "He that spareth the rod hateth the child." We maintain, again, that some of our profoundest students of human nature have held strong opinions as to its necessity. Dr. Johnson, for instance, when he found once a family remarkably well-conducted, and knew that their parents had been somewhat severe disciplinarians, cried out, parodying a line of Shakspeare's—

Rod, I will honour thee, for this thy duty!

We ground our belief in the rod, in fine, upon broad views of man. He is made to receive at a certain stage, and to expect, cor-

poral punishment, both as a part of punishment and of education. In childhood, as well as in society, there is a period when motives addressed to reason or to love have little power, and when the sufferings of the body must become an exponent of the evils the parent would have his child shun, and of that deep principle which leads him not "to spare his son for his crying." In the history of society this period passes away, and the gallows shall, by and by, be buried below the school; but as long as children are children, so long ought a system of well-managed corporal chastisement continue, and to be, as it has been from the beginning, and still is, a most salutary practice, tending, as it does, to rear up not a race of soft and timid saplings, nor yet a conceited and self-complacent generation, who deem themselves wiser than all their teachers, but a manly, courageous, and hardy race, whom an early encounter with the stern realities which overlap and disguise love in this world of ours, prepares for taking a sober, just, and uncoloured view of the mysteries of existence, and of the great principles of moral and religious truth.

What the parent principally requires in his children is, of course, *obedience*. When that is cheerfully yielded, his course is abundantly clear. It is to accept it BOTH as a debt and as a gift; and, as such, not only to acknowledge, but to reward it. The principle of rewarding good conduct in children seems to us involved in the parental relation. It springs out of that excess and ecstasy of affection which dwells in a father's heart. It is an acknowledgment besides of the individualism of the child. Men do not reward well-going machines. And it tends to secure and perpetuate obedience. But suppose the child does become a recusant to his father's will, the question as to the parent's duty becomes more complicated. It creates first a solemn duty, already spoken of, that of chastisement; but should that prove unsuccessful, and the child persist till his perseverance in indolence or iniquity amount to confirmed contumacy and rebellion, then there arise two alternatives; either the child must be summarily cut off, or his father's love must be evinced by some new, startling, melting scheme of kindness, in the hope of reclaiming

him. The father, if he be really a father, will probably choose the latter ; but suppose, once more, that the child resists even this, and clings with reckless infatuation, or with the inveteracy of confirmed habit, to his error or sin, what remains for the most indulgent parent to do ? He may either pardon him at once without terms, or propose new terms, or exclude him from his family once for all. The first he dare not, the second he cannot, the third he will. Were he doing the first, he would destroy the law and order of his family, and shatter the integrity of his own character. Were he doing the second, the new terms might meet with the old reception, and the word "weak" might be affixed to the brow of a parent who had repeatedly "called and been refused." To the third, therefore, he is reluctantly compelled. He must drive him out of his house, and emphatically, and for ever, leave him to the "freedom of his own will." Were he not so doing, he might remain a parent, but would cease to be a man.

CHAPTER II.

NO DISCOVERY OF GOD'S PATERNAL CHARACTER IN
NATURE.

WE have, in the previous chapter, given an outline of the principal features of the character of a father—an outline bare and hard, and yet true, we believe, to the *average* of earthly parents. We proceed now to show that nature gives us no distinct or satisfactory evidence that we have a Father.

Every one remembers the awful and magnificent dream of Jean Paul Richter—a dream confuting atheism by pushing it to its extravagance and excess, answering the godless argument, by a *reductio ad absurdum*—how the dreamer climbed to the highest star, and found no God—how he descended to the lowermost abyss, and heard the rain-drops falling, and the everlasting storm raging, but found no God—and how children rose from their graves, and answered in shrieks the cry of a pale and hopeless Christ, descending from the heavens, and saying, “Neither, I nor

you, have any father!" This dream, if nature had been the only oracle on the subject, were conclusive against the existence alike of a God and a Father. The rain-drops, the storm, the sunbeams, and all the complicated effects and harmonies produced by their action, interaction, and reaction, are incapable of articulating the sound, or inscribing the sense of the great Saxon word, Father.

To prove our proposition, we need do little else than quote the language of Job, "Hath the rain a father? and who hath begotten the drops of dew?" It is not the intention of this matchless poet to deny the fact that rain and dew spring from the one "womb of the morning," or that they do not indicate design and foresight on the part of their Creator. But the words seem to show that mere design cannot prove such benevolence as is implied in the term Father. Design proves a designer, but the designer may not be a father; he may be, for aught dew or rain can tell, a mere wondrous mechanician, or he may be a tyrant, or he may be a mighty and hopeless mystery, or he may be an incontrollable fiend. Nature on this subject is dumb, although

she seems sometimes trying to speak out; she utters at times a "a great tumult, but we know not what it is." "Eloquent babbler," we are tempted to exclaim, "magnificent mute, wilt thou never speak plain? Wilt thou never shape us out some distinct utterance from those vague sounds of song which tremble or tumultuate over thy lips? But no; thou art for ever unable. Thy winds, amid all their varied voices, cannot say, 'we are winged by a father's power.' Thy waves, amid all their mighty murmurings, cannot tell that they are held in the hollow of a father's hand. Thy stars, amid their perpetual wanderings, cannot say, 'we are rolling round a father's throne;' and thy thunder cannot, from its cloudy chariot, proclaim, 'I am the echo of my father's voice.' Nor are thy organic and living creatures able to utter this great truth, any more than thy inorganic and inarticulate products. The cattle do not low it out in the meadow; the bird does not sing it in the brake; the eagle does not scream it up to the sun; nor does the lion utter it in the rich thunder of his awful voice to the listening desert. And not only so;

but there is much in nature which seems to contradict the idea of a father. There are spiders, and serpents, and sharks, and mitred lizards (this last species of reptiles seeming useless ugliness, decorated and made more hideous by the adornment); there are tigers 'burning bright in the forest of the night'—terrible incarnations of the demons of hunger and brutal wrath, tempting you to repeat the poet's question,

Did he that made the lamb, make you?

There are comets, those serpents of the sky, trailing their volumes of deadly glory amongst the shuddering heavens; there are pestilences slaying on the right hand and on the left; there are deserts, of interminable length and unsearchable desolation, surrounded, like the dying scorpion, by a ring of impassable fire, hostile to man, and peopled by monsters; there is, in fine, O Nature! thy mystery of death, who loads the whole creation with the gloom of his raven-wings, and makes the very stars seem deceitful in their brightness, and the sun a 'great glittering lie,' as he shines in the vault of a world which it claims as its empire and prey! Is this a spot chosen

by a father for the education of his infant children ? or is it a den of banishment and torture for his foes ; is it a nursery, or is it a hell ?”

It is recorded of David Hume, that on one occasion, looking at the heavens in a clear and starry night, he said to his friend Adam Fergusson, “ O Adam ! can any one contemplate the wonders of that firmament, and not believe that there is a God ?” On his way to Egypt, Napoleon cried out to his atheistic savans, as on a fine evening at sea they were denying their Maker, “ This is all very well, gentlemen, but,” pointing to the stars, “ who made all that ?” This instinctive reasoning, so far as the existence of a Creator is concerned, seems unanswerable ; but in reference to His character, and, especially, His relation to our race, it is extremely uncertain and weak. It is distance that makes these orbs glorious to us. Closer at hand, we might find them either, as in the case of the moon, vast, shapeless, wrinkled masses ; or, as in the case of the fixed stars, burning continents of vacancy, which we can now “ look upon and live,” only because they are far away, but which,

approached more nearly, would consume us as a moth is consumed.

It is true that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." But let us look more narrowly, and see what it is that they do, and then, what they do not, and cannot declare. They declare, as we have just seen, God's being. The construction of the human eye has often been appealed to, as itself a sufficient proof of the existence of God. It is certainly so; but as this kind of proof is necessarily cumulative, how much do we add to it when we bring in the "thousand eyes" of heaven as witnesses to their Maker; the sun coming out daily from his chamber, an old, unwearied Titan; the strong slave of light and fire, and of their mysterious Author; the moon following him, at an awful distance, and yet with an irresistible fascination, as a lovestruck, lowly maid might trace, tremblingly, the steps of some fierce warrior; the planets, turning in their meek orbits;

the fixed stars, twinkling in the distant spaces; and the milky way, winding in a stream of suns, through the depths of the universe! All this not only declares the existence of God, but His vast superiority to us. What man can count the number of the stars, and name them every one, besides creating and sustaining them? Which among the sons of the mighty can "bind Arcturus with his sons," "guide the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" The heavens declare, too, God's varied perfections—His power, as having launched all those systems; His presence, as supporting them in their courses; His wisdom, as exhibited in their laws; His truth, as manifested in their regular succession and unvarying uniformity; a certain general goodness, like a "saccharine element," pervading such things; and still more, a stern justice, avenging wrong and punishing error by whomsoever committed. But here their information comes to a full stop. The material universe does not inform us that its Maker is, in a proper sense, infinite. It, extensive as it seems, is no more infinite than a drop of water is to the ocean.

And from a finite work how can you argue an infinite architect? The material creation does not even declare itself as a rounded and complete system. It does not explain the numerous exceptions which exist to the general principles, in reference to its author, which it has revealed. After all it tells us of God and His perfections, it leaves Him a puzzle still. It tells us nothing of the immortality of the soul. It says not a word about the fall of man, or about means for his recovery. It shows us stars falling, but hints not of the fall of a brighter luminary from a higher sphere. No star-beam stammers out the doctrine of an atonement, and no zephyr whispers of Eternal love. Nor is the creation able, with all its fiery syllables, to write out before us, in bold, clear characters, the one blessed word, Father.

Take some of the features of the fatherly image, as described in the former chapter, and compare them more particularly with the discoveries of nature. There we said that a father begot his son in his own image. But, taking nature as our only standard, what, according to it, is the image of God?

Imperfect, uncertain, fluctuating, as moonlight imaged in a troubled sea! And how are we certain that we are sprung from Him at all? Many, indeed, say and argue so, even upon natural grounds; but many more deny it, and maintain that we are but a part of a procession from an unseen and unintelligible cause in the past, on through mud, and eels, and oysters, and mammoths, and ichthyosauri, towards an unknown and unintelligible end in the future. And what or who, on these grounds, is to decide the question? If the latter theory be true, the doctrine that we are the sons of God becomes simply a ludicrous lie. We have, at best, within us, but the twenty millionth transmission of an aboriginal creative energy. Nay, as Topsy thought of herself, we have not been made, but have only grown. We spoke of a father's love and pity to his children; but where, in nature, do we see any evidence of such a peculiar and warm-hearted affection for individuals? Emerson, *on his own principles*, is quite right in maintaining that what he calls the "genius" or "demon" of the universe cares nothing for individuals—studies only

grand effects, and seeks to gain them often by the sacrifice of the interests of particular persons—is, on the whole, stern, harsh, and cold, although, it is supposed, “not without a secret kindness in his heart!” This is a faithful outline of the father of nature. He loves man, not men. He has, it is true, a “secret” (“sneaking” were a better word) love for persons; but, taking him all in all, he is only a larger Napoleon, riding to great, general schemes of conquest, over millions of mangled corpses. And Emerson, we repeat, is right on his own grounds. He has severely daguerreotyped the thought of God, which, without the discoveries and hopes of the Bible, nature teaches. He has accepted the wrong side of the alternative, Revelation or despair; reducing us, in fact, to a race of animalculæ, whom God rather likes *en masse*, but crushes in detail, and may, possibly, reduce, even as a whole, to annihilation. Yes! verily, on the showing of these apostles of nature, well may we re-echo that piercing cry which has resounded in every age—a cry as of forsaken birds, as of benighted babes, “Where is our father? We have neither

heard his voice nor seen his shape. Father—or have we, indeed, a father—and are we not sprung rather from a blind, iron heartless fate, which no more regards our individual birth, or life, or death, than it does the death, life, or birth of the million dewdrops which morning sees born, which no evening sees remaining, and which, peradventure, leave a blank as large in their world, as the race of man extinguished, would leave in the great field of the heavens ?”

We spoke next of a father’s responsibilities and duties. The God of nature is bound by neither the one nor the other. Those, for instance, who follow His *example* in His natural laws, would soon put themselves out of the pale of humanity, and find in it an excuse for iniquity and crime. God slays the innocent with the guilty—why should not they ? God kills infants—why should not they ? God sets fire to forests, and mountains, and worlds—why should not they to houses and to cities ? God sends the miasma of pestilence—why should not they circulate it to their neighbours ? The works of some celebrated writers of the present day are per-

vaded by a modified form of this monstrous error. Because there are destructive energies in nature, we should destroy one another. Because lions and tigers and sharks prey on men, they should bite and devour and hang each other. Because God often leaves those who have erred to the full consequences of their guilt and folly, men are bound, even at an earlier stage, to give them up too! In short, God's mysteries must become our duties—the *apparent* spots and shadows on his great disk, must be copied into our character and life! Again, we say, in reference to the author of the "Model Prisons," as we have said about Emerson, that on his own principles he is right. If there be no God but the God of Nature, then nature is God; and if nature is God, then our duty is to do whatever nature has done before, or is doing around us. But how can this consist with the blessed thought of a good and universal Father? Some have maintained that the grand object of God in nature is *education*. All the mysterious proceedings and fearful phenomena of the universe are intended—as well as its milder and gentler aspects

—to instruct us. Earthquakes, plagues, and all similar calamities, are, they hint, just severe teachers, caring not whether we hear or whether we forbear—tossing us truth through thunder or in flame, through misery or death. A ship on fire, with its hundreds of shrieking wretches, is just the sparkle of the lightning-rod held in our great Teacher's hand, as it descends on his pupils. Spenser's house, burning, with his tender little ones inclosed, was simply a lesson from Heaven. Sayannah-la-Mar, taken down at once by earthquake into the depths of the sea, where it lies, *seen*, it is said, at times through the crystal medium of the clear hyaline—and Pompeii and Herculaneum sunk in a storm of fire-snow—were just tremendous *readings* with the Sovereign Tutor. The true sage, according to these views, consequently, is the man who, after any calamity, cries out, not "God is good notwithstanding," or "God is just,"—but simply, with the Mahometans, "*God is great.*"

Now that nature, in all its forms and phenomena, can instruct, is conceded—but we deny, first, that this is apparently its principal

purpose, else why is it so ineffective—why does it not produce more generally—we say not moral results, but even physical or intellectual instruction? Do not these extraordinary calamities rather stupify and overwhelm, than teach? What real light, of a purely philosophical kind, have they yet cast upon God's method in His universe. But, besides, is the instruction they give that which we would have expected from a father? Must not that Father have been in some extraordinary manner, angry against many of those on whom he inflicted such evils? And if not angry with all of them, must not those who were his friends, and who yet suffered with the rest, have received some compensation in a future life, for the calamities inflicted on them? We ask such questions upon our principles, but the devotees of nature admit of no anger in God—of no compensation as needed or possible, and very dubiously, if at all, of the existence of a future life. Consequently, on their system, God is *not* a Father. Besides, if God be neither good nor just, of what consequence is it to know that He is great?

That there is a certain sort of discipline in the universal scheme, is admitted by our naturalists. They talk of "justice being done now," of the "world being full of judgment-days," and of neglected truth returning on its despisers "clad in hell-fire." But this language describes rather retribution, than discipline—the work of a judge, rather than that of a father. Besides its operation is always spoken of as something impersonal—imperative—implacable, and is compared to a vast "treadmill," grinding on its irresistible way. This theory does not recognise a father; indeed, one of its leading Rabbis says that "the earth is his mother and divine," seeming thus willing to trace his origin and his sufferings, as well as joys, to a dirty mass of matter (compared by one of his own school, in reference to its size in the great whole, to a "lead-bullet circulating") and not to a Divine Eternal Spirit, who, while taking up this earth as a very little thing, has yet created all its children, and who loves, and pities, and cares for every one of them, and will one day, more fully and

grandly than he has even in revelation, hitherto, convince all that *he does*.

We need scarcely, in fine, show that the theory of naturalists, leaves no room for any interposition in behalf of the rebellious. If they fall, they fall, and can never be restored, save by seeking, when it is in all probability too late, to live in accordance with natural laws, which, in general, they neglected, because they had never been taught to know their existence, or, at least, to appreciate their value and supremacy. The system utterly ignores a Gospel, as a last grand expedient on the part of a Father, and spurns away the very thought of such a mediator as the Lord Jesus Christ. It knows of and believes in nothing, but a certain dry and stern necessity, whose plans are all at once imperfect, and incapable of alteration or improvement; which, in fact, combines, in a monstrous mixture, imbecility under the name of imperfection, and cruelty under the name of impartiality—and yet is called Law—Justice—God.

Thus, Great Father, do many of Thy misled

and unhappy children judge of Thee entirely by the black veil Thou in nature wearest, and not by Thy bright eternal Self—as Thou art to be seen in the sanctuary ! There alone dost Thou reveal Thy fatherly smile, and alone display Thy fatherly purposes. And those who will not seek for Thee there, and who persist in worshipping the thunder—disguise, instead, the glorious reality of Godhead; do even already, and shall yet more fully know, that they are now, through their own folly and blindness, dwelling in a “forsaken and fatherless world ;” and hereafter find (may God grant it to be otherwise with them), that “ it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

CHAPTER III.

NO DISCOVERY OF THE FATHER IN MAN, IN HIS SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, HEART, OR IN ANY OF HIS RELIGIONS.

THIS is a large and difficult text—and in a book designed as a popular and short treatise on a profound theme, must be summarily handled.

It may, at the outset, be asked, why have you not spoken of Providence, as either contradicting, or substantiating, the doctrine of the Father—God ? We answer—that in our previous chapter, we have anticipated most that can be said, with confidence, on that subject. Providence, in truth, is just the *production* or elongation of nature ; and the same reasons which show that the Father is not clearly seen in the one, show also that He is not visible, or at best, but very dimly so, in the other. Indeed, the acute reader will notice, that in our second chapter, we have been compelled to *run* the argument from nature into that of providence—the two are so inextricably connected.

Dark, confessedly, is the path of God's providential dealings in this lower world.

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

In other words, providence, no more than nature, proves God the Father, far less reveals to us the Son. Providence, until we view it in the reflex light of revelation, is a mystery quite as perplexing and hopeless as nature. The unequal distribution of wealth and comfort—the steadfast darkness which rests on the circumstances and history of many of the good—the “cruel sunshine thrown by fortune on a fool,”—the phenomena of infant suffering and early death, of madness and idiotcy,—the permission of evil, the continued existence of ignorance, and slavery, and superstition, and brutal barbarism,—the dark history of disease;—such are only specimens of the deep shadows which cloud the system of providence, and leave the question uncertain, whether it be or be not the plan of a Father.

But it may be asked, whether, supposing

nature and providence both silent, or worse than silent on the subject, may we not derive some information from a contemplation of man himself; may we not in his science, or philosophy, or history, or heart, discover certain evidences that he is a son of God? and must, therefore, have a Heavenly Father? If we cannot distinctly see the fatherly features by looking up, may we not, looking down, see them reflected in the mind and heart, and conduct, and civilization, and achievements of man? But here, alas! we are met, not with new light, but by a deluge of new darkness. For if God in providence and nature be a mystery, man seems not less, but more mysterious. He is formed as if of a thousand conflicting lights and shadows. He seems compacted out of all contradictions. While his feet touch the dust, and are of miry clay, his head is of gold and strikes the empyrean. He is mysteriously linked on the one side to the beasts that perish, and on the other to spiritual existences. Nay, inanimate nature itself claims acquaintance with this "quintessence of dust." The periods of his life bear a strik-

ing analogy to the seasons—his brain at times moves to the moon; his heart, as well as cheek, is coloured by the sun; his advancement as a species, bears a distinct relation to the changes of the earth's surface, and to its place in the heavens; he is a representative and microcosm of the universe—has imbibed at once its glories and its glooms — has snatched from the star its fire and its mystery, and vibrates, like the string of a harp, to every breath of the Great System with which he is connected. Having notions of, and aspirations after, absolute perfection, he is, and in some measure knows himself to be, a vile sinner. Lord of earth, sea, air, and all their riches, he is a fretful, discontented, and on the whole, miserable being. Able to weigh the sun, to span the fields of space, acquainted with the times and seasons of the heavenly bodies, full of "thoughts that wander through eternity," he is yet doomed to sicken, to die, and to have his low grave kissed by the smile of the orbs whose spots he has numbered, and whose eclipses he has foretold. Humboldt speaks of the Andes as including in their vast sweep, all climates and seasons and

productions of earth, between the ocean below and the hoary head of Chimborazo above—thus man rises from his cradle to his snowy head in age, touching, as he ascends, all the conditions, and running parallel to all the gradations of Being, and remaining, in each and all, a mystery, having indeed all mysteries compounded and compressed in his one mysterious self. “When I consider,” says David, “the heavens, what is man!” But may we not invert David’s statement, and say “when we consider man, what (in grandeur, terror, and incomprehensibility) are the heavens!” Strange such an anomaly seems and unaccountable—stranger still, if this anomaly were the son of God.

Proceeding from such general views of man, to consider the more special displays he has given of himself, we shall find very little to substantiate his own belief, that he is a child of God. Think of his history in the past! Take away the scriptural explanation of it, and what a monstrous blood-dyed chaos it becomes! Grand gleams, indeed, there shine through it, of patriotism, of courage, of genius, of self-sacrifice, of love, stronger than

death, and of an earnestness, deeper than the grave. But though these gild, and in part glorify, that wild hurrying storm which is the real history hitherto of man, they leave it a storm still. They do not explain, but serve rather to deepen the confusion, the misery, and the gloom. They constitute the exceptions, and not the rule. The progress of the race, how uncertain and fluctuating! The motion of society, so like that of a pendulum perpetually oscillating between different sides—those of barbarism and civilization, of intelligence and ignorance, of superstition and of some mild and merciful faith. Nations so often brought to the birth, and yet bringing forth nothing. Revolutions promising to introduce the millennium, and ending in some wretched military usurpation, which soon in its turn goes down in a new sea of blood. Great spirits rising, and permitted to throw the *shadow* of themselves—and nothing else—over masses of men and cycles of ages! Other (potentially) greater spirits stifled in the bud, and leaving only behind them the remnant of a hope, and the echo of a name! A few greatest men stiffened by

neglect, into the position of the statues of orators, eternally seeking to speak oracular words and never able. Everywhere cowardice, treachery, lust, cruelty, selfishness, and blood; and through this weltering confusion, perceptible at least to *the eye of sense and calculation*, no steady onward current—no slow though sure and mighty revolving plan! Such is a brief but comprehensive outline of the general history of man hitherto, and we ask what evidence does it adduce, in support of the doctrine of a Divine Father?

Or look to man's intellect and intellectual achievements. Take first his science, that proudest and most pompous of the pillars he has raised to his own aggrandisement, and let us see what it has told us on this all-important theme? The answer lies in a word—it has told us a great deal about law, but nothing whatever about the lawgiver. It were amusing, were it not unspeakably melancholy, to witness from year to year the meetings of clever and accomplished men, who periodically come together, and in their associations contribute their fractions, toward some wonderful future whole of truth—some bringing in new asteroids,

others a few antediluvian fossils ; one or two heaving under the weight of an unregistered comet, some less heavily burdened below a theory about the origin of language, or about God's method of making stars ; great in grasses many—greater in gases some, all aspiring to build up a universal system or a God, by a scheme as hopeful as were the payment of the national debt by Irish pennies, or the building of a palace by the piling up of the pebbles that lie on the wayside. Honour to their industry and perseverance in sowing the wind ! But have they ever been able to answer the question proposed long ago by one they profess now to admire (most disinterestedly, since he has all along despised and reviled them)—it is in reference to electricity —“ *whence comes it—what is it—whither goes it?*” Science hitherto has merely been scratching at, or scrabbling on the door of nature—nature we mean as viewed in its grander and more spiritual references ; and all we can say at present is, let it scratch and scrabble on ! Even Hugh Miller's attempt to reconcile our present stage of scientific inquiry, with the

old Hebrew intuitions of moral and spiritual truth, seems generally admitted to be an eloquent failure.

Or take man's philosophy, his conception, in other words, of the interior laws of our strange humanity, of those principles that pervade and underlie our and nature's being. Alas! in it, too, the image of the Father is but faintly seen. Even the lips of transcendentalism falter in pronouncing the word, Father. The most complete and severely-logical system of philosophy is that of necessity, which could easily be shown to exclude the idea of a Father, and on his vacant throne, to establish an eyeless and shrouded destiny. How extremely uncertain, too, are our systems of philosophy! What a chaos of contradictions has its history been! Bold and powerful indeed have been the spirits, who, regarding art as trifling, and science as shallow, have aspired to enter into the springs and secrets of things, and to compel truth herself, to answer them from her inmost shrine. But in proportion to their ambition has been their failure. Metaphysical specu-

lation has been "an arena, not a field." We sicken as we remember the innumerable attempts which have been made even by the mightiest minds to solve the insoluble, to measure the immense, to explain the mysterious. From such have proceeded many cloudy falsehoods, a few chequered gleams of light, but not *the* truth. Many a golden grain, and many a polished pebble, has been picked up on the shore, but the great ocean which conceals the Father, has remained unsounded. Only *one* plummet has been able to pierce its waters.

If man were to find evidence of his sonship anywhere, surely it might be expected that he should find it in his own heart. And yet, that depth, too, says "It is not in me." Noble elements there are in the human heart, of pity, affection, courage, firmness, and daring; but taking the heart of the general man, it is not a little heaven within the breast, but a little hell. Out of it proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and whatsoever doth defile the man. In it, as in a fountain, sleep war, conflagration, rape, incest, and a thousand dark and dragon-like forms. "The heart is deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" We can fathom many things—the ocean, the grave, the deepest and darkest mountain tarn; but there are two things we can never fathom, the pit of hell, and the bottomless blackness of a human heart. Who can know it? Thyself, O man? No. Thy neighbour? No. The keenest and sharpest observer of human nature? No. Angels, do ye fully understand it? They answer, No. Demons, it has been your dark study for ages, do ye understand it? They answer, No. Almighty God, dost Thou? He replies, "I, and I only. I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." That dark, soundless heart can indeed be purified—but only the love of the Father can perform this, and that love can only enter through the power of supernatural influence. Till then the heart, so far from being a proof of the existence of a Father, is a strong argument against it.

Or let us, in fine, look to some of those religions in which man has trusted for salvation. Most of these give, indeed, the name of Father to their Supreme Deity, but this probably is a mere tradition which they have borrowed

from God's original revelations to unfallen man ; and, at all events, the actions and attributes they ascribe to Him serve altogether to neutralize the name. The heathens lay to the charge of their Father—Jove, &c., actions of the basest and foulest character. Their gods are just themselves, magnified in size, and covered with the shadow of deeper depravity. Range around the ancient and modern Pagan worlds, and in which of their hideous deities, their Molochs and their Marses, their Bramahs or their Seevas, can you discern any of the features of a Father—anything that is truly benevolent, disinterested, amiable, pure, or good? The Allah of the Mahometans is great, and greatly is he feared, but has no really Godlike lineaments. In fact, each god in the pantheons of the nations seems constructed as a huge and horrible *caricature* of man ; and no wonder although the wiser of their sages, revolting from the representations given of them, took refuge in absolute atheism, or in a vague pantheistic creed.

Thus, in vain, have we searched for a Father, in nature and in man. In both, the cry

“ Oh that I knew where I might find Him !
that I might come even to His seat ! ” has been
answered only by the hollow echo, “ Where ! ”
Ascend to heaven, He is not there ; make we
our bed in hell, He is not there ; take we the
wings of the morning, and fly we to the utter-
most parts of the earth, there His right hand
doth *not* hold us. Shall we then drop the
search in despair ? or shall we, rising from a
brief trance of wonder and sorrow, go to one
Teacher, not yet consulted, who has engaged,
by vows and promises dipt in His own blood,
to “ show us the Father ” and it shall suffice
us.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCRIPTURE DISCOVERY OF THE FATHER.

MANY are the glories which surround the Bible, "On (its) head are many crowns." Its spirit of holiness and purity, its depth of insight and intuition, its simple majestic grandeur of utterance, its honesty and faithfulness of speech, its narrative so interesting, its pathos so profound, its eloquence so overwhelming, its poetry so transcendent, its glimpses of the future so supernaturally clear and far-stretching, all unite in proving it the "Book of God and the God of Books." But nothing we think in it all, so elevates it above other writings, so clasps it to the heart of humanity, or covers all its pages with such a soft autumnal light, as its revelation of God's fatherly character, and the manner in which that discovery is made. "Have we a Father?" was a question which all men had been asking; now with ardent hope, now with fierce impatience, now in querulous, and now in despec-

rate tones; asking at priests and at philosophers, at nature and their own souls, but asking in vain, when suddenly the truth came down straight from heaven to the peaks of the Syrian land, and there—

Like Maïa's son he stood

And shook his plumes, that heav'nly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide.

And since, to the ends of the earth has the glorious message travelled, that “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

This discovery is a full-length one. It is common to both the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, but has much increased in clearness under the latter. It is the great truth of Christianity, and from it all the other peculiar doctrines of our religion, as from a fountain, are derived. It, as taught in Scripture, serves, in a great measure, to explain the mysteries by which we are on all sides begirt. It shines most clearly in the wonderful character, nature, and history of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not only full of

light upon the past and the present, but pregnant with hope for the future.

1. This discovery is in *full-length*. By this we mean, that of the God of Scripture we find all the qualities predicated which we have seen to be involved in the conception of a good Father. He hath begotten us. "We are also His offspring." "Not we, but He us made." He hath begotten us in His own image. "In the image of God made He man." "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." He feels for His children, unutterable love and pity. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." A hundred other passages aver the same truth. He has bound himself to perform certain duties to his children. "I will lead them," he says, "for I am a Father." He comforts them, for He is the "Father of Mercies and the God of all comfort." He correcteth them, for "whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." He instructeth His children, for it is said, "His God doth instruct him to discretion." He is the Father of all men, recognising no distinc-

tions of caste, clime, or colour, for “(God) hath made of one blood all nations who dwell on all the face of the earth;” and in Christ there is “neither Greek, Jew, . . . nor Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” His children have fallen from their allegiance, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;” and consequently “the wrath of God hath been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.” Yet the Great Father hath not forsaken His family. He hath provided a full and free salvation, through the sacrifice of His own Son, for all that will come to Him. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He has urged this salvation upon their acceptance. “Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?” His great complaint of men is that they will not accept His best gift. “Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life.” And it is only because they obstinately persist in their rejection of the Gospel, that He is compelled at last, by a regard to His own honour, to say, “They are joined to (their) idols—let (them) alone!”

“ Because I have called and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded. I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh.” “ What could I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done ?” The prodigal son who returns, the father receives with gladness ; the prodigal son who chooses to remain with his husks and harlots, he reluctantly leaves to himself, and “ himself ” becomes his proper hell.

Such is an outline of the fatherly character and conduct of God, given almost entirely in the words of Scripture. Now it is remarkable that a large portion of the texts cited belongs to the Old Testament, and many more to the same purpose might have been quoted. From this it appears that the doctrine of a Divine Father, so far from being a late discovery of Christianity, was known to the earliest Jewish writers. It was a Father, who, while turning our first parents out of Eden, lent them, nevertheless, a golden ray of promise which lighted up their solitary way. It was a Father, who, after pleading, through Noah, for 120 years with the antediluvians, at last “ repented that he had made man on the earth,” and sent a

deluge to sweep the giant race of transgressors away. It was a Father, who, after having prepared for Himself a tabernacle of thickest gloom, seamed with lightnings, and after having sent tempest, thunder, and the trumpet to herald the way before him, came down on the quaking Sinai alone, unseen, in wrath, and yet uttering from that cloudy tabernacle not only the fiery law but the words—His own character described by himself—"The Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; repenting him of the evil, and showing mercy to thousands of them that love (Him) and keep (His) commandments." And it was a Father, who, in the latter days of the dispensation, sent prophet after prophet, "rising up early and sending them," all clothed indeed with terrible majesty, all radiant with unearthly fire, all denouncing sin, and proclaiming judgment as its sure reward, and yet all preaching the loving-kindness of the Lord, offering pardon to the guiltiest should they turn from their way, and weaving the rainbow of mercy around the skirts of the darkest and thickest clouds of vengeance. Every one who reads

the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel will admit that he, the sternest of the prophets, was yet full of the knowledge of the true idea of the Father; aware not more of His inflexible justice than of His deep love for His children.

But the great discovery was as yet in its dawn, and was contending with heavy clouds, partly springing from the remnants of Pagan superstition, which continued to mingle with Jewish practices and feelings, and partly from a misapprehension of some of their own divinely-appointed rites. Of necessity, too, was the idea imperfectly entertained till it had received its principal and overwhelming proof. That was only to be given when God, in order to melt the hearts of His rebel children, should take upon Him our nature, and exhibit the full "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." This was, so to speak, the Father becoming one of the children, that the rest of them might be saved. What a marvel was thus exhibited on that solemn night in the manger, when, as the seraphim were singing without to the shepherds, the tidings of great joy, and as the strange bright star was beckoning forward the Magi to the spot,

the virgin brought forth her firstborn Son ; and where, as *she* called his name Jesus, unseen sponsors standing by, said, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, *the Everlasting Father*, - the Prince of Peace!" "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." The faces of ten thousand suns give no such revelation of the Father's glory, as did the one gentle smile of that newborn babe in Bethlehem.

During his after career, during his boyhood, when he "must be about his Father's business;" during his public ministry, when, as he said to Philip, "they that saw him saw the Father;" and especially in his last discourses, it was Christ's main object to reveal the Father, not merely as his, but as that of the whole human race. How often, and with what deep emotion, he uses the term! It is remarkable how rarely he has employed the names of "Lord" or "God;" the words "Father, Father, Father," are, instead, perpetually on his lips. "I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,

and hast revealed them unto babes." "My Father is greater than I." "I and my Father are one." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with me where I am, that they may behold My glory." "I go to the Father." "The time cometh when I shall show you plainly of the Father." "The Father himself loveth you." And even in that dark hour, when, looking up to heaven, he saw the sword of divine justice bared and quivering towards his own breast, even then the dear name Father will not desert his lips, and he cries, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee." In Gethsemane's garden, having looked into the unspeakable cup, and while shrinking from it for a moment, it is into a Father's arms that he falls back, and these are his melting words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done!" On the cross, he had, at the deepest crisis of the tragedy, when a darkened sky seemed the visible scowl of heaven, in the chill of the great shadow, exclaimed, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" as if,

for a moment, the feeling of fatherhood had forsaken him, and as if he *dared* not then pronounce the name—but mark! how it returns to his lips, with a new gush of tenderness, divided between his Father and his murderers, when he cries out, almost with his last breath, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!”

The fatherhood of God, thus proclaimed in Christ’s ministry, written in the language of his life, and sealed by his blood, may be called **THE** truth of Christianity, inasmuch as from it all the other master-doctrines of our religion flow. In this sense we may invert the words, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” into “He that hath seen the Father hath seen me.” The incarnation of Christ was just the manifestation of the Father (through the second person of His triune nature) in the Son of Man. The atonement was simply the removal of all the obstructions which on the side of law, prevented the Father from clasping His children to His bosom. Justification, adoption, sanctification, and regeneration, are names for various parts of one process, for removing all those qualities which,

on the part of the children, might render them offensive to their Parent. All the graces, too, bloom and expand in the sunshine of this sublime conception. Faith trusts her Father's word, Love spreads her wings, and Hope weaves her golden hair below her Father's smile. Peace nestles secure, and half-asleep, in her Father's bosom, and daring Joy lifts up her eagle-eye to the unveiling splendours, and the "terrible crystal" of her Father's heaven.

This thought, or fact, is the only one that casts any satisfactory gleam of light upon the mysteries that environ us. For why? It proves that within all this rugged, raging, fiery torrent of things we call the universe, there beats a heart, as well as an intelligence—a heart bearing a certain resemblance to the best of human hearts, only that it must be infinitely purer and more profound. It declares that we are not to judge of God by those dark and contradictory exhibitions given of Him in nature, providence, and the history of man. These are a father's disguises; they are not necessary to our conception of a father. They do not spring from His nature; they are not essential to His government;

they are only clouds which have arisen in the morning-sky of His reign, and which shall certainly be swallowed up in the blaze of its noonday. Tennyson asserts that—

“ EVERY cloud that spreads above,
And veileth love, itself *is love*.”

This is striking and seems profound, but it is *not* true. Were it true, it would follow that these clouds might continue for ever, and that the Father's face might remain for ever veiled. This is indeed what most of our naturalists contend for. “Society,” says Emerson, “never advances.” The secret (sneaking, as we prefer to call it) kindness to man, is never to be more fully displayed. The notion of a millennium, which Godwin and Shelley borrowed from the Bible and then perverted, has been very generally abandoned by our present race of sceptics, who look hopelessly on at the revolutions of the grim wheels of necessity, as it works on its mysterious way, and cry, *Esto perpetua!* Whatever improvement they do expect, is not to come from above, or to spring from any clearer and softer view of God, but solely from man's own increased culture. The Bible, on the con-

trary, in its revelation of the Father, first of all, asserts, that God made all things originally very good, so that the evil which entered into the world (from whatever quarter it came) was not a necessary or eternal thing; it entered the universe, and after serving certain purposes, it is to be crushed, bound, if not entirely annihilated. Thirdly, that the most of the calamities which infest human life are the direct result of man's sin, *i. e.*, of his voluntary estrangement from his Father. Fourthly, that so much of the darkness surrounding God's character as does not spring from man's revolt, and his distorted views of Deity, is a black mask worn by him for a season, to try and prove His children, and to enhance the joys of the discovery when He shall entirely drop it, and show Himself still more plainly than now, as the Father; and, fifthly, that faith and love, and piety and Christian activity, even in this present state, may realize and anticipate the entire dropping of that mask, and enable men to solve for themselves the mystery of the universe. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The man who

believes God's testimony that He is a Father, who loves God's Son, who humbles himself before heaven, who labours for the advancement of his species, who prays, and who lives as a Christian, soon sees the darkness melt into the morning twilight, which already, too, begins to blush with the colours of the coming day. We knew a family where one of the elder branches once put on a black mask, and entered suddenly amongst a company of children. Many of them shrieked and fled ; but one fearless and holy child, who was soon after carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, went calmly forward, put the mask aside, and revealed the smiling face of her elder brother. A striking parable of those who, strong in faith and hope and holiness, pierce through the tenfold eclipse which rests upon the sun of love, and see it as it is, and is to be.

For the full triumph of the Father—God is reserved for the future. Faith, hope, and love are all great ; but while in one sense, as Paul says, " the greatest of these is love," in another sense the " greatest of these is hope." " We are saved by hope." But for

hope in the prospect of the future, our piety would often threaten to expire under the pressure of the fearful difficulties which surround us. Expire indeed it would not; but how greatly does the hope springing from the Scripture thought of a Father, tend to cheer and revive it! The Christian motto is emphatically "Excelsior." Never do the writers of the Bible wax so eloquent as when describing the "glory to be revealed." So far from continually reverting to the past, and seeking to stereotype human progress, as has been often charged against them, they are for ever standing tiptoe on the mountain tops of prophecy, and uttering cries of exultation, as they see in the distance the wolf dwelling with the lamb and the leopard with the kid; every valley filled with light, and every mountain crowned with glory; righteousness running down the streams, and peace brooding on the oceans; the dark phenomena and rampant evils of earth removed; the sword of war sheathed; the arrows of pestilence blunted; the violence of fire quenched; the evils of poverty abated; tyranny and oppression crushed; the inequalities of social life

filled up; "iniquity, as ashamed, hiding her face;" the sting of death extracted; the mystery of the grave explained; law lost in love, and love reigning sole sun in the sky of a regenerated world. Yes, for then the Father shall be "shown clearly" to all His children. Listen to the words of Isaiah, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that *I* may be glorified."

But this is not all; for the vision of these surpassing prophets extends far beyond the circle of earth's history. It gives us glimpses, at least, of the whole universe as illuminated

and reconciled. It shows us a dim perspective of a general heaven, a "restitution of all things;" the scheme of paternal love at last completed, "compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and baptized in the waters of immortality. This vision is not indeed so clear as that of the future reign of righteousness on earth. The very mingling of the two visions on the prophetic page serves somewhat to confuse that which is the remoter and the more sublime; but we may, nevertheless, if we look attentively through the telescope, see that a regenerated earth forms only the first round of the giant ladder, "the top of which reacheth unto heaven." "I saw new heavens and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.' And he that sat upon the throne said, '*Behold, I make all things new.*' And he said unto me, 'Write, for these things are true and faithful.' " Surely there is a prospect pictured in this passage which far transcends even a millennial earth. It opens up a vista unspeakably wider. It shows us the spectacle of all worlds (save the pit into which the wilfully disobedient have descended) combined and refitted into one harmonious system, rolling around the eternal throne, and singing in one chorus of a myriad parts the glory of the Universal Father. Anticipation sublime, but not too sublime to be realized! Hope high, but not too high to be fulfilled! Dream splendid, but not one of those which look ridiculous in the light of morn, and "vanish at the crowing of the cock!" Who that had seen the wild, weltering chaos, with its huge reptiles, its upheaving convulsions, its strange skiey commotions, and all its "pageantry of fear," could have ventured to predict, without hesitation, our

present fair and ordered world? And yet above the wasteful deep arose our well-organized and beauteous earth, and God said of it "It is very good." Even so shall our present moral anarchy be subdued and calmed; and the Father, looking abroad upon a universe where all is peace, holiness, and bliss, and where every wave in that starry deep gives back faithfully His smiling image, shall say again, and once for all, "It is very good."

'Tis come, the glorious morn, the second birth
Of Heaven and earth! Awakening Nature hears
The new-creating word, and starts to life,
In every heighten'd form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To Reason's eye refined, clears up apace.

Ye good distressed,
Ye noble few, who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure! yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view that only saw
A little part, deemed evil, is no more:
The storms of wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

WE come now to not the least difficult part of our task—that of answering objections to the Scripture doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Let us seek to reply to these in a candid spirit, and as briefly and clearly as we can.

It may be said that this discovery has not explained the awful aboriginal question as to the origin of evil. Secondly, it seems contradicted by the doctrine of election. Thirdly, it leaves the state of the heathen world in fearful uncertainty ; and fourthly, it seems irreconcilable with the eternal punishment of the wicked.

1st. This discovery, it will be said, has left the question “ Whence evil ? ” in all its mighty, unfathomed obscurity. You tell us God is a Father, and loves His world, and His children, and is to redeem them both from evil—but why did this Father send or even permit

such a fearful entity to pervade His universe at all, and to work for ages such irredeemable mischief and misery? Was this like a Father? Even supposing,—what you deny—that He is at last to save *all* his children, yet where the necessity or the benevolence of conducting them to heaven, through the experiences of an earthly hell? In answer to this, we have first to express our belief that this question as to the origin of evil, profound and unfathomable as it is, has seldom, out of the schools, been stirred, except by the silly or the morbid, or the evil-disposed. Evil's children have been the most puzzled about their own genealogy! A healthy, manly, conscientious mind feels at once “this subject, like that of the existence of God from eternity, is one I can never fathom, and to continue puzzling myself about it, is at once weak and wicked. I will let it alone; I will believe that God has permitted the existence of evil for wise reasons, and I will wait His time for the disclosure of these reasons. I know there is a God, and that I am required to worship Him, although I cannot understand the mode of His existence; I know, too, that evil is, and

that I am bound to hate and war against it, although I cannot tell *whence* it hath come, or even metaphysically *what* it is." Such will ever be the language of common sense on this matter. But, secondly, the Christian can say more. He can say that evil is to cease from the universe—that God is to deliver earth and man from it, that it is to be destroyed greatly through human effort—that it is not, therefore, infinite or eternal, and that the wise method is not to seek to explain, but to seek to extinguish it. The discovery of the Father, if not the discovery of Evil's Father and of Evil's beginning is far better; it is the discovery of Evil's enemy and its end. Look, in like manner, at that dark Asiatic disease which, from time to time, spreads terror and death over the nations. Its nature and origin seem hopelessly obscure—but were one finding out an infallible specific for it, would such questions be agitated any more? Who would care for knowing the cause of that which was in a sure process of being banished from the world? So it is just because men do not believe in the Gospel remedy for evil, or its

predictions of its close, that they fret and harass their minds by interminable inquiries as to its nature and its origin.

But, secondly, it may be said that the doctrine of a divine Father cannot be reconciled to that of election. It may be said, "If election be true, then you have proved, not fatherhood, but favouritism. God has, without any reason, passed by many of his children, and, without any reason, has elected others." But surely this is grossly to misrepresent the doctrine of election. When divines say that God elects, they understand that he does it for certain reasons—although these reasons are not at present known to us. He elects in sovereignty, and sovereignty means, not acting from mere caprice, or in opposition to justice—but "giving none account of his matters" at present—acting with the dignity and reticence of a monarch, who does not choose to reveal his counsel, save at the time, and in the manner he sees fit, but whose character is enough to show that his secrets are all holy secrets, and all his mysteries, mysteries of godliness. Election we do not profess to understand, but we con-

tend that God's love to all His children, and his gracious offer of mercy to them through Christ Jesus, are truths still more indisputably scriptural ; and that those who have a practical experience of their truth, will not trouble themselves very much about the inscrutable decrees of God, satisfied that no one will be condemned simply because he is not elected, and that no one will be saved simply because he is.

But a third objection meets us. " You seem to have proved satisfactorily that the light of nature casts but a very feeble, fluctuating, and contradictory light upon the moral and fatherly character of God. What then is to become of the heathen world, who are doomed to live and die under this imperfect light ? Since they cannot possibly find the Father, are they to perish in this ignorance ? Since the glorious light of the Christian Revelation has not reached them with all its blessed news, are they, in a mass, to be turned into outer darkness ?" Here a question is started, which we confess to be one of deep difficulty—as all questions connected with the future state are. We can only help its solution by remarking, that

even though the light of the Pagan world were sufficient for Pagans, this, by no means, would excuse or shelter those to whom Christianity has come, and who have rejected it. They are placed in an entirely different category—for they have heard a divine message, and have despised it; they have been called to look up to a sun-like Father, shining in their sky, and have sternly or contemptuously refused, and, therefore, it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for them. It follows that whatever punishment may be inflicted upon the heathens, must necessarily be of a secondary kind—they are excepted from the crushing and conclusive curse “*This is the condemnation*, that light has come into the world, and that men have loved the darkness rather than the light,” and, therefore, the Apostle Paul always treats the state of those heathens who have never seen the glorious light of the Gospel as an exceptional case—they are a “law to themselves,”—their crimes have, he shows, been very great, but the palliations have been great too—God, therefore, has “winked at these times” and

victims of "ignorance," and has, unquestionably, alleviated, if not in many cases averted, their doom. To them, to use the remarkable language of the same Apostle, "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man" has not "*appeared*," and by that kindness and love they cannot be tried—but woe to those who have seen this magnificent, but mild and merciful apparition from heaven, and have confounded it with a device of hell, or called it a mere natural production of earth!

The last objection is, perhaps, the most formidable of the four. It is connected with the doctrine of eternal punishment. Men ask, and ask with considerable plausibility, "Is God a Being who cares for oxen—who numbers hairs—who watches the fall as well as the flight of sparrows—who lavishes beauty and seeming love upon the vilest of his creatures, shedding splendour on the serpent's back, gilding the spider's web with sunshine, and out of the fierce "eaters" of the forest, bringing forth meat and honey for the imagination of man—who, above all, has so clothed, and decorated, and dignified the human race

—feeding them, leading them, informing them, sending his Son to die for them, and proclaiming, as with the many trumpets of a jubilee, that he is their Father—Father of all of them, without any distinction or reservation—and yet shall he allow any of these “little ones to perish,”—nay, shall he spend eternity in stirring up the flames of their slow, sure, *accumulating* destruction? Is he a Father, and shall He cast and allow myriads of His children to remain in the unquenchable fire? You have said that evil is to cease from the kingdom of the Father, how can this consist with eternal punishment?

On this subject we propose to enter for some little length, and with all tenderness, for it is a tremendous theme, and the light cast on it in the Bible is chary. Now, first, we have to complain of various misrepresentations made of this doctrine, partly by its foes and partly by its friends. Many talk as if the *majority* of the human race were thus to be “salted with fire.” Of this there is no evidence whatever. Nay, there is evidence to the contrary. There is to appear around the Throne at last a “multitude that no man

can number." We do not press the literal acceptation of these words; but, certainly, they seem to teach us what were antecedently so probable—that God shall have at last the victory over the devil, and shall save the vast majority of the human family. And this majority may be made up from those who die in infancy—from the secret, silent thousands, in every land and age, who have not "bowed the knee unto Baal," and from that fertile future field where nations are to "be born at once, and people in one day." Some have swollen the number of the victims of perdition by "paving hell with infants' skulls." We pass THEM by in silence, or by simply saying, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; into their assembly, mine honour be not thou united!" Some have used fierce and truculent language in defence of this doctrine, and a dogmatic tone exceedingly worthy of the worshippers of scholastic theology, although exceedingly unworthy of the professors of the faith of Jesus Christ, and leading to serious doubts if they have ever imbibed the genuine spirit of the Gospel. Even Jonathan Edwards, and

one or two other good and holy men, have deeply offended in this fashion. They have not only shut, but trampled on the eternal sepulchre. They have discovered a violence of fanatical wrath against their poor fellow-mortals caught in the embrace of the worm that dieth not, which has excited a strong reaction of disgust and defiance in many minds. They have generalized the terrors of the universe into a system, without remembering that the Gospel has come like a sunbeam athwart these terrors, and has lighted up the face of things with gladness. They have talked, to use Foster's language, of the "Almighty as a dreadful King of Furies, whose dominion is overshadowed with vengeance, whose music is the cries of victims, and whose glory requires to be illustrated by the ruin of his creation." Others of the same class have gone the length of denying that any, who even believe in universal restoration, can have "undergone a change of heart," or be fit to sit down in the same alliance with slaveholders! Alas! the words of Burke are truer of this kind of Christians than they are of the class to which they were at first applied,

“The same sun which gilds all nature and exhilarates the whole creation, does not shine upon disappointed ambition.” For “disappointed ambition,” read “soured fanaticism,” and you have the men before you, “raying out,” as Burke adds, “darkness, inspiring nothing but gloom and melancholy, and *finding a comfort* in spreading the contagion of their spleen.” Others lay too much stress upon the literal language of Scripture. They terrify their hearers or readers by pictures of literal fire and brimstone, saying with one of their number, deceased, “There is *real* fire and *real* brimstone.” Now all this has long appeared to us little better than blasphemy. It reminds us of one of the subtlest touches in Scott, where, in ‘Nigel,’ he describes an Alsatian quarrel between a captain and an ex-parson, both of whom swore violently, but the latter was enabled greatly to surpass the former in oaths, owing to *his superior knowledge of theology!* So the frequent and reckless use of the strongly-figurative language of Scripture on this awful subject, is fitter for the lips of bullies and hedge-priests, than for those of Christian ministers. It

ought to be remembered, too, that it is chiefly on the weak, the ignorant, or the nervous, that such language now exerts much effect, and the effect on them is rather pernicious than otherwise. The wind of Sinai is not now able to unloose the cloak of the traveller—although it may whirl him into the gulf of madness or despair; the mild shining of the Sun of Love can alone melt him into freedom. Of the same false and destructive tendency are those statements—becoming, thank God! fewer every year—about some monstrous decree of reprobation—some “pre-established hatred” of God to certain men—about the wicked being “vessels of wrath,” not by their own fault, but by God’s unalterable predetermination. Such “lessons of despair” we leave, without a word of comment, to be howled out by the grim-faced few, who still preach them to the gaping few, who still believe, or at least listen to, their dreary “tidings of damnation.”

Still there are “terrors” in the “Lord,” and even “*our* God is a consuming fire.” Scripture seems very distinctly to declare that a certain number of the race are to be

lost—to have no “place found for them in heaven,” to be omitted in that roll of the firstborn which is kept above. There is a “without,” as well as a “within,” to that “city,” and the one, as well as the other, is peopled. Our view on this subject may be thought by some too lax, and by others too severe. We shall, however, shortly state it. We believe, then, first, that the number of these shall be comparatively small. Christ did not, indeed, answer the question, “Are there few that be saved?” but the question, undoubtedly, referred to that era of the Church, and not to the history of the human race as a whole. Then Christ might say, “Fear not, little flock;” but his prophets had long before predicted that the “little one was to become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.” It has been sometimes said that, even to save one soul, it had been worth while for Christ to have died; but surely it tends at once to stop the mouths of adversaries, and greatly to magnify his work, that “by his knowledge shall God’s righteous servant justify *many*,”—ay, **THE** many, the great majority of the race, “leaving

nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and the slaves of concupiscence." If the cross be a mighty magnet planted in the centre of the world, if Christ's word be true, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw *all* men unto me," surely hell shall be found emptier, and heaven far fuller, than many exclusives of all sects at present suppose.

We believe, again, that all who shall enter that city of pain shall feel and acknowledge that they are there because they would not be elsewhere—that they are there in opposition to the will of their Father. How many who are abandoned to evil courses, even now, with their last breath, admit that they owe their ruin to themselves? How few, comparatively, "curse God and die?" Still more may this be the case in that region where sinners shall only reap the full harvest of the seed they had sown on earth!

We speak, of course, in the dark, but we have long thought that the principal punishments of the lost shall be rather privation, a sense of degradation, of their Pariah

position, and the continued prevalence of sin, than of any positive infliction. But farther, on this and many cognate topics, we do not and dare not enter. Suffice it to say, we believe in eternal punishment, first, because we see it in embryo, *here*. Indeed, we should have difficulty in believing that there was such a thing as damnation in God's universe, *did we not see it begun*. We believe in it, again, because the Scriptural expressions, declaring its truth, have defied the torture of ages, and continue to lie on in the alembic, dark, unsolved, unalterable in their force. We believe it, again, because we find no distinct discovery in the Bible of the opposite view—a view which, if true, might have awakened from the prophetic lyre strains higher and richer still than did the prospects of a millennium on earth. We believe it, too, because the Gospel is always spoken of as an *ultimate* remedy. We believe it, in fine, because we can see reasons why a portion of our guilty race might, like Lot's wife, be erected into an eternal pillar and monument of the exceeding evil of sin—and

a warning to all after orders of moral beings, to "remember and fear to transgress,"—and why even this should serve to glorify the Father's character, and to intensify the love and worship paid to the Father's name.

* In saying that evil is to "cease out" of the universe, our meaning is simply that it is to cease as an aggressive power. It is to die as the robber dies when he is chained to the galleys. It is to be shut up as the house infected with leprosy was shut up. It may continue as a beacon to be seen, but shall cease as a "fiery cross" to be circulated.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN.

WE pass to a short practical application, which we shall sum up, in a few conclusions from what has been said in the previous chapters.

We infer, first, that the past is not on the whole a pleasing subject of contemplation. Secondly, that on the other hand, progress, the idol of this age, is but a sorry god. Thirdly, that Christians in this day of doubt and darkness should rally more unitedly around the paternal idea of God as the true and only one. Fourthly, that the Christian advocate should appeal more than he does to the future, as triumphantly answering objections, and showing the real plan of the Father. Fifthly, that there is no hope in any modification of naturalism. Sixthly, that there is none in any sentimental dream of universal restoration; and finally, that personal religion can only be upheld by a constant reference to, and reliance on, the

Divine Father, as revealed in the person, character, and gospel of His Son.

1st. The past is not, on the whole, a pleasing theme of contemplation. It is with it, as with the past history of most individuals. Who would live their entire life over? Who can bear to see even portions of it in the mirror of memory? Who would like to go over it all again, although only in some vast voluminous dream of the night? It is in every instance so chequered with sin, so confused with mistake, so disjointed in purpose, so nugatory in results. And the life of a single man is but a type of the mistakes and miseries, the crimes and confusions of the past history of man, the species. Cordially we admit, with the poet, that—

Through the ages an increasing purpose runs,

And the thought of man is widened with the process
of the sun's ;

but how often is this purpose seemingly buried in mist, drowned in blood, lost in the night of despotism ; and what save revelation has told Tennyson that there is such a purpose at all? Indeed, there is nothing worth regarding in that "majestic past" another

bard raves about, except the gleams of Divine Revelation—the stray features, gathering toward that revelation of the full face of a Father, which at last appeared when “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, did shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus.” History, unless written under the presence of this grand Christian idea, is neither more nor less than an impertinence.

2nd. It follows that progress, in its common acceptation, is a miserable delusion, the superstition of infidels, and the god of atheists. Here, too, there is a resemblance between the history of the individual and that of the race. How often are we deceived about the progress of an individual! He seems to have been growing steadily, while it has been all along a *deceptio visus*. It has, perhaps, been but the growth of one morbid part, and not of the whole man. In society it is the same. Without God, man’s advancement is as much an illusion as sometimes the motion of a railway carriage, which appears moving, while it is the one it meets which *really* is. Even with God the progress has been exceedingly slow, principally

because man has in general resolutely determined to do without Him, like a child who tries to walk alone. It shall be otherwise in the future. But we are decidedly of Foster's opinion that the complete renovation of the world shall be wrought out by means as independent of human instrumentality as is the rising of the sun. Man indeed can and ought to work and wait—if he work in the divine strength, and wait for the divine blessing; but if he begin to prate of “progress” and to trust in it, and to understand by it either a fixed fatalistic motion, or the mere result of man's own unaided efforts, he is hopelessly wrong, and deserves to see the “whole of human hopes, wishes, efforts, and prospects brought down in a long abortive series by the torrent of ages, to be lost in final despair.” If the god Progress be thought worthy by his admirers of being painted, let it be as a Proteus, eternally changing his form, but never advancing—remaining indeed in all but skin, shape, and colour, perpetually and tantalizingly the same.

3rd. Christians should, in this era, rally around the doctrine of a Father, as, along with

its consequents and correlatives, the great truth of Revelation. We live in a transition period, and one proof of it is the existence of certain huge *transition minds*, reminding you of the composites of geology. Such minds were those of Coleridge, Foster, and Arnold, who stood at the top of this new page of the world's history, like the word "carried forward" in arithmetical summations, connecting the gains of the past with those of the present and the future. They loved the past much, but the future more, and tried with various success to unite and reconcile the two. Like the pterodactyles, and other creatures of the great chaos, they united solid power to winged swiftness. Now for an age, which has produced such typical minds, we can conceive nothing so well adapted as the prolonged emphatic assertion of the Fatherhood of God. Away with scholastic distinctions and subtleties! Away with coarse and barbarous horrors! Away with fierce and hollow denunciations, dying away in the very throats of those who utter them! Away with desperate attempts to prove the *ipsissima verba* of creeds which stand now rather as monu-

ments to a dead God, than as fingers pointing to a living! Let all theologians—let all Christians—feel that they are embarked in a sea of mist, with but one light, the relict ray of the Father's face, which shone two thousand years ago into the darkness, and with but one hope, that if they trim their sails and keep their watchmen awake, and move steadily and slowly onward, He will look out upon them once more—what matters it from what point? in a mist the sun may be looked for from any!—and give them light for accomplishing the rest of their perilous journey. Love made, love redeemed, and love can alone deliver us.

I'm apt to think the man
That could surround the sum of things, and spy
The heart of God, and secrets of his empire,
Would speak but love: with him the bright result
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,
And make one thing of all Theology.

We have had the full avatar of the Apostle Paul, the metaphysical and dialectical apostle; we have had enough of Peter, the ceremonial and positive; but where is the Apostle John, the Apostle of love? Or, as he lay on Christ's

bosom on earth, is he only to be seen on Christ's bosom again when He appears, like the planet Mercury, half discovered, and half lost in the neighbourhood of his parent luminary the sun ?

4th. The Christian advocate should, more than he does, appeal in defence of his faith, to the future. He should say to the adversary, " You are judging of a half-finished experiment, and concluding that it has failed. Now Christianity lays its hand upon the future—it places its " record in the skies "—it " appeals unto Cæsar, and unto Cæsar it shall go." Grant that its evidences are not demonstrative ; grant that it has exhibited certain symptoms of decay ; grant that it has not hitherto cleared up all, or most of the difficulties connected with nature and God—allow it time ; remember that while it has performed much, it has promised infinitely more. It is but a giant germ. It is but young as yet, will you not allow it to grow ? Since its infant steps shook the earth, surely its mature and manlike progress shall turn it upside down. The power that shook, demands only time and opportunity to change and regenerate the world.

Tell us not that it is effete. This is the mere assumption of the adversary. If it ever was true, it must remain true for ever. No great truth ever became a lie, any more than any lie can become a truth. If it were effete, it would not be producing even now such "fruits of righteousness," and exerting such moral power in the world. If it were effete it must have perished before the many-winged wounds aimed, especially of late, at its heart. No! if it have "left bearing," it is only like Leah and Rachel for a season, and previous to bringing forth its last great birth, that of a renewed and glorified earth. Michael the Archangel, according to Milton, took up our first parent to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him the future, to confirm his faith. So the Christian advocate should take up the adversary to the Mount of prophetic vision, and show him a Christianity made perfect and universal, to confute his gainsayings and to stifle his sneers. There he will see the Father's plan in its full development, "the mystery of God on earth finished, and the times of the regeneration fulfilled," and

the "whole family" in heaven and earth assembled.

5th. There is no hope from naturalism under any of its modifications. That mountain, verily, is effete, even of the mice-like progeny it was wont to produce. Never in its grander shapes of the past, in its proud religions and prouder philosophies did it succeed in satisfying a single heart, in giving peace to one wounded conscience, in producing either true faith or true humility, or true holiness. If there be any exception to this, it lies in the philosophical dreams of Plato, which, amid their many gross errors, contain so much that approximates and adumbrates the truth, particularly about this very doctrine of a Father, about the importance and inviolability of the parental relation; about the emphasis of a father's blessing, and the weight of a father's curse; and the relation of all this to God—that we are driven with many to imagine that the divine Plato had access to the diviner Moses. As it is, his philosophy bears the resemblance to that of the Scriptures, which the clouds of an evening often do to the mountains over

which they rest; the same in shape and colour, but not in substance or basis. Yet what are our philosophies of this day, but mangled with Platonism! And what cheerless, and withal absurd abortions, they are! Man, according to a large class, is the Christ, and a sorry Christ he is. "Man," says Bacon, "is the god of the dog;" but were a dog fancying himself a man, it were a supposition less monstrous than the doctrine of universal Immanuelism. If man be the Christ, where are the works which prove him so? If every man has the divinity, nay, is a portion of the divinity, why is he so corrupt and malignant? If the history of man be the history of God in human nature, why is it little else than one tissue of blood, falsehood, and low sin? We think that this school might far more plausibly start the hypothesis that man is the devil, and that his history has hitherto been a long development of diabolism; and in proving this, they might avail themselves to great advantage of Que-
telet's tables, which demonstrate the significant fact that certain works of rather an infernal character, such as rape, murder, and

arson, reappear in steady mathematical succession, and no more than summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, are ever to cease! The presence of such a law would go far to prove that man was an immutable and forlorn child of hell.

If this doctrine of Immanuelism be true, certain strange conclusions follow. If man be God incarnate, then there can be no such thing as guilt, and there ought to be no such thing as punishment. God is at once the judge and the offender. It follows, too, that he is the creator of all things; that the sun is but a splendid mote in man's eye; that the moon is but his prolonged smile; that stars are just lustres in the room of his soul, and the universe just the bright precipitate of his thought. It follows again that no supernatural revelation ever did or ever could exist. It was Moses, not Jehovah who spoke on Sinai. It was a man, not the God-man who uttered the sermon on the Mount. All future revelation from heaven is in like manner rendered impossible by the denial of any heaven, save the mind of man. This is of course a gospel of despair—of the deepest and most

fixed despair. The dungeon into which it introduces its captives is cold and low ; it has no outlet, no key called Promise is found therein. The sky, indeed, is seen through the windows, but it is distant, dark, with strange and melancholy stars ; and but one hope, like a cup of prison-water, is handed around among the dwellers in this dreary abode—the hope of death, of silence and dreamless rest for evermore.

It follows, in fine, according to this creed, that humility and all its cognate virtues are mere mistakes. “Trust thyself, every heart vibrates to that iron string.” A greater man said two thousand years ago, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven ;” and another said, “When ye are weak, then are ye strong.” Yes ! for all the powers and elements of nature combine with Christianity in teaching men the one great simple word, “Bend !” “Bend !” the winds say it to the tall pines, and they gain the curve of their magnificence by obeying. “Bend !” gravitation says it to the earth, as she sweeps in her course around the sun, and she knows the whisper of her ruler, and stoops and bows

before the larger orb. "Bend!" the proud portals of human knowledge, say it to all aspirants; and were it the brow of a Bacon or a Newton, it must in reverence bow. "Bend!" the doors, the ancient doors of heaven say it in the music of their golden hinges to all who would pass therein; and the Son of Man himself, although he could have prayed to his Father, and presently obtained more than twelve legions of angels, had to learn obedience, to bow the head, to suffer and to die, ere, like a "King of Glory," he entered in. "Trust thyself?" No! Christianity says "Mistrust thyself—trust God—do thy humble duty, and call the while on the lofty help that is above thee." How fine the words of Burke (since appropriated by Shelley) telling us to "love all men, and to fear ourselves!"

Such is a mere specimen of those hopes and principles of our fashionable philosophy, which, to our knowledge, are at present, in the case of thousands, shaking belief, injuring morality, poisoning natures originally kind, embittering tempers originally sweet, hanging thick cosmical clouds between lofty souls and the Great Father, not even producing that

poor, beggarly, outwardly-clean life, in which this sect seem to think that all morality consists, and leading to a life "without hope and without God in the world." Can any more, except what is evil, be expected from such sources?

6th. There is no hope in any dream of universal restoration. We are willing to grant that this is now maintained by many good and holy men, who are led to it by their views of God, and not by mere terror about themselves. It was held by John Foster; it is preached by the able and profound David Thom; and it is the argument of the richest poem of this century, the immortal "Festus." But to us, looking at it with a calm, sober eye, it seems "news too good to be true." It can find no "rest for the sole of its foot" in Scripture, which always judicates that a portion of the race are to suffer for ever, so to speak, in the stead of others, and that there is a point where the good and the incorrigibly wicked, are to part to meet no more. Even Plato, in the famous Tenth Book of his Laws, seems to incline to this doctrine, where he shows that sin is no trifle; that God is not

easily appeased; that there is an "immortal controversy" between good and evil—God and his enemies, in which the least taking-part with the foe, or even neutrality, is treason against the cause of good throughout the universe. In fact, the doctrine of universal restoration reminds us always of one of the magnificent, but frail and fading pomps of clouds which the evening sun forms, as if in sport, ere retiring to his rest; it is equally beautiful, and equally unsubstantial and evanescent; if it be "gorgeous land," it is but "cloud land" at the best.

Even though we were granting it possible that such a dream might, in some distant cycle of the days of the years of the right hand of the Almighty, be realized, how meagre and uncertain this prospect! How dangerous to trust in it! How far better to go at once to the Father, who stands to us revealed in his Son, beseeching us to be reconciled! This offer once accepted, Pandemonium becomes no more to us than its picture would be; its smoke disappears as we ascend in spirit upwards; its flames flash less and less fiercely, till they cease to be seen,

and above us, there appears nothing but light lost in light; splendour drowned in splendour; glory rising behind glory; a Jacob's ladder of never-ceasing ascent; and far aloft, veiled with inaccessible brightness, the Father is seen beaming forth all heaven, through the eternal smile of His lips; and we feel, with unutterable emotion, that we are included in His regards, and can never be severed from them; "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Finally—Personal religion can only be upheld by a constant reference to, and reliance on the Divine Father, as revealed in the person, character, and work of his Son. We must be utter orphans, or we must have a living and loving Father. There is no alternative. The state of an orphan of this kind cannot be painted in colours too dark and deplorable. He is alone in the world. No withered leaf, which this autumn wind is

threatening soon to tear from the tree, and to scatter over the heath, is half so desolate. He is like the atom of Pollock which God made superfluously, and

Needed not to build creation with, but threw aside—
With everlasting sense that once it was.

What words more painful than these, "I was once a man"—except such dreary sounds as Bunyan puts into the mouth of his "man in the cage," "I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes and also in the eyes of others. I once was, as I thought, fair for the celestial city, and had even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither. I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in it, as in an iron cage. I cannot get out. Oh! now I cannot." These are the true sighings of an orphan soul, which once lived under the kindly shade of an Almighty Father, but has gone out from his dominion, and committed himself to the tender mercies of nature and of philosophy, which are but cruelty, or to his own unbridled passions, which are set on fire of hell. To such, ere the dark seal of death is set on the transgression, or the door of the cage be shut in thun-

der, the voice of the Father, swelled and deepened by the consenting accents of Son and Spirit, says, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings," and "I will love you freely." "The Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

Should, alas! these accents be resisted and despised; should the self-made orphan desire, as it were, to make full trial of his forlorn condition, and to sound the depths of orphanhood, and to seek to know the dreary utmost of his disinherited condition, then the Father is compelled—as he regards His own dignity, as He values his own word, as He regards, too, the rights of individual freewill, and the safety and harmony of His universe—to allow the wild goat to burst his way into the "wilderness of sin." Follow his farther course in all its devious windings, or precipitous leaps, or desperate recalcitrations, or sudden yearnings after return, when return is impossible! we dare not. Scripture dares not, or, at least, does not, withdraw the darkness from his doom. Yet, it is not altogether in-

conceivable. You are reminded of the sublime paradox in Job, "There was silence, and I heard a voice." Yes! through the deep silence which closes over the orphan's destiny there is heard a melancholy voice—it is the orphan's own, describing and deploring his doom: "I might have been in my Father's bosom. I am left alone with myself and my own shadow. I might have been united to the great band of heaven's labourers, who rest not day nor night, yet who never weary. I am employed in reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds. I might have sailed along with the stately fleet, whose flag, as it shines through the golden isles of eternity, bears the motto, 'Onward!' onward to still richer landscapes and nobler pleasures—happiness at every prow, and God at every helm. I am a castaway on a desert ocean, and from my bleak rock I see no sail, and hope for no deliverance.

" 'Glory hath passed me like a ship at sea.' I might have been a free child of the Almighty Father. I am a slave, whose bonds are clasping me in a deeper embrace as the slow ages roll on. 'O wretched man that I

am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "

The poet, indeed, sings:—

At length I heard a voice from off the slope,
Cry to the summit—"Is there any hope?"
And then an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand.
And on the glimmering limit, far withdrawn,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

These sublime words hold out, however, a prospect which Scripture does not recognise, however pleasing it may seem to be to human nature. Let the sinner lay not their flattering unction to his soul; but, dreading that orphan's doom we have thus feebly attempted to describe, let him up and flee for his life. "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation."

How dignified and how happy, on the other hand, the position of an accepted and glorified son of God! Again let us quote the divine words of the beloved disciple: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." *Now* it doth not yet appear what we shall be, for it is but the bud of our being, the dim twilight of our immortal day. Neither, on entering

our Father's house, shall any list of the pleasures prepared for his children be put into our hands. Obscurity ever adds to grandeur, and distance to enchantment. It shall not *then* appear what we shall be. Nor throughout all eternity shall we know accurately the next stage in our progress, far less all the rising gradations of glory which are before us. It shall *never* wholly appear what we shall be. In that one word "Sonship" there lie a length and a breadth, a height and a depth, which pass knowledge, and set even imagination at defiance. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him. It is a "burden of glory" at every stage; but to see it all before us at once, were to render that load altogether intolerable.

And can Eternity belong to me,

Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?

Can, especially, a happy eternity be ever mine? These are questions which, in certain meditative or melancholy moods of mind, come on us with overwhelming force, starting up a species of scepticism by the very sublimity of

the conception involved in them. The true way of reinstating our confidence in the verity of eternal things is by turning away from the thought of ourselves, and reposing on the great and fertile image of the Father. He is ; his wealth of being and of power and of love is inexhaustible ; He has connected Himself with us by a tie at once the tenderest and the most indissoluble ; He has called us by His name, stamped on us His image, and given us His Son ; and so long as He lives and sustains to us these endearing relations shall our trust and hope in Him remain undiminished, and shall we continue to realize His presence and to bask in the sunshine of His smile. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." And what although that Father we may never hope to see, even in His celestial abode ? We shall feel His presence in a manner of which now we cannot even conceive. He shall be around us, like a sweet incense in the evening air, or like a melody in a twilight room, where the performers are unseen. And although the

Father be invisible, the Son shall "appear to our joy." Blessed thought! almost unbearable in its bliss, that of seeing Jesus; of hearing Him discourse; of watching the glories of that smile which brightened up the world when at the darkest, and which is the light of heaven; and of hearing the beatings of that heart which bled for us on Calvary! Though it were to gain nothing else than this, surely no labour should be spared, no suffering and no self-denial grudged. It is of such only as thus endure, and labour, and deny themselves, that the words shall be found true—

His dwelling, 'midst the strength of rocks,
Shall ever stand secure;
His Father will provide his bread,
His water shall be sure.
For him the kingdom of the just
Afar doth glorious shine;
And he the King of Kings shall see
In majesty divine.

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